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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The eight titles deal with the following topics: (1) the initiating and responding communication behaviors of primary school students who score high as compared to those who score low on language and reading tests; (2) listening comprehension as a factor in attrition/retention in higher education; (3) the effects of organization, pauses, and questions on college lecture comprehension; (4) the effect of student participation in self-analysis, peer evaluation, model study, and self-analysis and peer evaluation upon speaking skills in the informative speech; (5) the speech content of selected seventh and eighth grade language arts textbooks; (6) the audience sensitivity and rhetorical sensitivity of college basic speech students; (7) a comparison of skills training plus cognitive restructuring, skills training only, cognitive restructuring only, and no systematic treatment in the reduction of trait-like communication apprehension in the classroom setting; and (8) the effect of prediscussion instruction in information processing on perceived quality of decision making, discussion efficiency, and group member satisfaction. (FL)

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Speech Communication Education and Classroom Instruction:

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Whaley, Marie Annala
THE EFFECT OF PREDISCUSSION INSTRUCTION IN INFORMATION PROCESSING ON PERCEIVED QUALITY OF DECISION-MAKING, DISCUSSION EFFICIENCY, AND MEMBER SATISFACTION

INITIATING AND RESPONDING COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS OF PRIMARY PUPILS WHO SCORE HIGH COMPARED TO THOSE WHO SCORE LOW ON LANGUAGE AND READING TESTS

Order No. 8201804

BARNES, NANCY MARIE VAN STAVERN, PH.D. *University of Oregon*, 1981. 219pp. Adviser: Dr. Mildred C. Robeck

The purpose of this investigation was to analyze and compare specific oral communication behaviors of primary pupils who socre high on standardized reading and language tests with those who score low. Analyses were made to determine the extent to which primary pupils used oral language communication skills in a simulated classroom setting and how such use related to academic achievement as typically measured by standardized language and reading tests.

A stratified, randomized sampling from a primary school population based on CTBS stanine data yielded 48 subjects in four categories: *high language, high reading, low language* and *low reading*. The communication behaviors of the subjects (in videotaped interactions) were analyzed, utilizing the Rieke Communication Model as the measurement instrument. Initiating and responding behaviors were measured, including non-responses, non-verbal communication, vocalizations, use of words, use of phrases, use of sentences, and questions asked.

Based on the application of the Kruskal-Wallis and the Pearson chi square test applications, data analyses indicated that predictions of specific communication behaviors cannot be made, based on reading and language stanine standardized test scores. Regardless of how the subjects scored on the CTBS Reading and Language Tests, they demonstrated comparable communication behaviors, with no statistically significant differences. The data did not differentiate between the four types of categorized pupils. Students who scored high (stanines 7, 8, and 9) on standardized reading or language tests did not initiate communications or respond more often. They did not exhibit higher levels of communication behaviors by more frequently using phrases and sentences and asking more questions, and they did not more frequently exhibit balanced communication profiles by scoring within the 40% to 60% range, when compared to students who scored low (stanines 1, 2, and 3) on the same tests. Students who scored high did not exhibit distinctive communication behaviors (non-responses; non-verbal communications; vocalizations; and use of words, phrases, and sentences), and they did not ask more questions, when compared to students who scored low. As a group, the 48 subjects responded upwards to 74% of the time, while initiating communications upwards to 26% of the time. In addition, the students asked few questions.

LISTENING COMPREHENSION AS A FACTOR IN ATTRITION/RETENTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Order No. DA8206448

CONAWAY, MARTHA SMITH, PH.D. *Southern Illinois University at Carbondale*, 1981. 129pp. Major Professor: Dr. Arthur L. Casebeer

This longitudinal study over six past semesters investigated whether listening comprehension skills alone, or with other variables, were a factor in attrition/retention of college students. A 10-year study was begun. The sample consisted of 418 Eastern Kentucky University students from both sexes, all class and achievement levels, and ages 16 through 57. Subjects were obtained through voluntary enrollment in a college study skills course under normal registration procedures. The *Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test* and *The Nelson-Denny Reading Test* were routinely given to all sections as part of the course.

The sample was divided into several sub-sets, and each one was individually analyzed. From 70 variables, gender, age, residence, class level, Nelson-Denny scores, ACT scores, and Brown-Carlsen scores were selected through multilinear regression analysis as most influential, with the latter three being frequently highly significant for total population in the sample.

Results. (1) A significant ($p < .0001$) positive linear correlation exists between attrition and listening comprehension scores of students at the academic dismissal level. (2) Significant positive relationships exist between higher education attrition/retention and listening comprehension skills, reading skills, and ACT scores--each at $p < .0001$. (3) Significant positive relationships exist between cumulative GPA and listening comprehension skills, reading skills, and ACT scores--each at $p < .0001$. (4) Age was significantly ($p < .05$) and negatively correlated with listening comprehension among students with a GPA < 2.0.

Conclusions. (1) Listening comprehension is an extremely important factor in higher education attrition/retention and student academic achievement. (2) First-semester attrition could be reduced if potential underachievers were instructed in listening techniques for lecture comprehension and use of context clues. (3) Students above normal college age with a GPA < 2.000 need testing and training in listening comprehension skills. (4) A listening comprehension test given as regular admission procedure to all in-coming students with low GPA's and/or ACT composite scores of 12 or less, would be an early alert to advisor and student of listening deficiencies and need for training. Since it appears that little or no empirical research on this specific topic has been done prior to this study, further research is needed to explore the topic extensively.

LEARNING BY LISTENING: THE EFFECTS OF ORGANIZATION, PAUSES AND QUESTIONS ON COLLEGE LECTURE COMPREHENSION

Order No. 8202238

FIELDS, JOHANNA H., PH.D. *University of Pittsburgh*, 1981. 105pp.

In order to study the relationship between lecture method and comprehension among low-verbal college students, lectures containing information about Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs were presented to 114 community college freshmen. All subjects in the study were from one to two years below grade level expectancy in reading comprehension and below average in their ability to write organized prose.

Six lectures were composed to investigate relationships among three main effects: lecture organization, method of interruption, and time of testing. Organization was separated into two levels, (a) inductive, which meant discourse was arranged in order of increasing generality and (b) deductive, which meant discourse was arranged in order of increasing specificity. Method of interruption was separated into three levels, (a) the question mode, which meant that questions based on the lecture were asked twice during the lecture at equally spaced intervals, and after a hesitation answers were given, (b) the pause mode, which meant fifteen second pauses preceded by a statement advising students to think over what they heard interrupted the lecture twice at equally spaced intervals, and (c) the no interruption mode, which meant the discourse was delivered continuously. The dependent variables, time of testing, were separated into (a) immediate comprehension and (b) recall after two days.

Approximately equal groups were assigned to each of the six conditions. Students were not permitted to take notes or ask questions during the lecture.

Comprehension was measured using a written twenty-item multiple choice test administered immediately after the lecture. Without giving students advance notice, the test was readministered two days later. Data were interpreted using a 2 x 3 x 2 analysis of variance for repeated measures.

Students given questions and answers during the lectures were no better at recalling information than students who listened to uninterrupted lectures or lectures interrupted with pauses of silence. Discourse organization, whether it was inductive or deductive, did not affect students' comprehension in any way that suggested one method of organization was better than another.

Evidence based on comparisons between subjects and a group of average students who participated in a separate pilot study using the lectures indicated that low-verbal students are poorer listeners than their more able peers. Results were interpreted as indicating that poor readers are not able to compete with good readers anymore successfully by having discourse presented orally than by having it presented as printed text.

Differences in comprehension were found between average and low-verbal students that were content specific. Low-verbal students reached their peak performance with questions that required comprehension of terminology; no differences were found between their ability to comprehend a series of propositions and their ability to draw inferences. Among average students, comprehension scores declined gradually as questions became more complex.

A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SELF ANALYSIS, PEER EVALUATION, MODEL STUDY, AND SELF ANALYSIS AND PEER EVALUATION UPON SPEAKING SKILLS IN THE INFORMATIVE SPEECH Order No. 8129893

JENNESS, TOM ELLIS, PH.D. *University of Idaho*, 1982. 97pp.

The purpose of this study was to determine which learning activity would assist students in improving their speech performance. The study investigated the effect of student participation in self-analysis, peer evaluation and model study upon the acquisition of speech skills. Four experimental conditions were studied: self-analysis, peer evaluation, model study, and self-analysis and peer evaluation. The conditions were tested for effect upon overall speech performance and upon specific speech skill achievement.

In order to determine the effect of the experimental conditions upon the performance of the speeches, four sections of the speech fundamentals class at the University of Idaho were selected for treatment. All four sections were presented identical instructional material. The first and third speeches of the class members were retained on videotape to serve as the pretest and posttest. The speeches were identical in purpose and specific assignment.

On the final three days of the class all students rated the speeches. All of the speeches were viewed on videotape and were presented in random order.

The analysis of covariance was the primary statistical test employed to draw inferences.

The subjects selected for the sample were compared for class standing, male-female distribution and ACT verbal tests. The sections were compared with all the other sections for the semester and between sample sections. Class standing was assessed through the use of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Two-Sample Test. The binomial test was used to compare the male-female distribution. The equivalency scheme and the analysis of variance were employed to test for difference between the sample sections on the ACT tests.

The analysis of covariance was employed to test for significant differences between pretest and posttest scores. A significance level of .01 was selected determining the effectiveness of the experimental conditions.

Rater reliability for the final rating sessions was tested through the use of the Ebel Inter-rater Reliability procedure. Rater reliability was tested in the same method during the preliminary speaking sessions.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Binomial, and Analysis of Variance tests revealed no significant differences in the sample sections.

The Ebel Inter-rater Reliability test demonstrated the students were capable of rating the speeches.

The Analysis of Covariance tests of the pretest and posttest scores led to two conclusions. *First*, the experimental conditions did not produce significant differences in the overall speech scores. *Second*, the experimental conditions did not produce significantly different scores in the specific speech skills. Only three significant differences were found. This indicated that there was no general tendency for superior performance which could be attributed to any single treatment.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECH CONTENT OF SELECTED STUDENT TEXTBOOKS IN LANGUAGE ARTS: GRADES SEVEN AND EIGHT Order No. DA8209221

RINK, PATRICIA JANE, ED.D. *Northern Illinois University*, 1981. 210pp.

The study was designed as a content analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, of selected seventh and eighth grade basic language arts textbooks for the purpose of determining the amount and emphasis of speech components contained within these textbooks and comparing these same speech components with those recommended by leaders within the field of speech.

Twenty-six recently published basic language arts textbooks at the seventh and eighth grade levels were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Speaking and listening categories, accepted by speech authorities, were established. These categories were speech communication, radio and television, film, debate, parliamentary discussion, oral interpretation, drama, and listening. To create a standard for use in comparing the content of the textbooks with an acceptable standard, definitions for each speech category were developed by using authoritative standards of performance.

The following research questions were investigated: (1) Do textbook publishers include the four language arts skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening? (2) Do textbook publishers devote a greater percentage of pages to the presentation of reading and writing skills than to the presentation of speaking and listening skills? (3) Do textbook publishers offer the same categories of speaking and listening skills at the same level of emphasis placement? (4) Do textbook publishers present material that agrees with the definitions of speech categories determined by speech experts?

The findings of the study were: (1) At both grade levels, thirteen publishers included the skills of reading, writing, and speaking. At the seventh grade level, twelve included the skill of listening; at the eighth grade level, ten included listening. (2) At both grade levels, all of the publishers devoted a greater percentage of pages to the presentation of reading and writing skills than to the presentation of speaking and listening skills. (3) The thirteen publishers offered the same categories of speaking and listening skills but not at the same level of emphasis placement. (4) By and large, the publishers followed the definitions presented by the experts for the categories of speech. In the majority of cases, however, the number of publishers presenting each category was small.

A STUDY OF THE AUDIENCE SENSITIVITY AND RHETORICAL SENSITIVITY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SPEECH 200, BASIC SPEECH, AT WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PEDAGOGY Order No. DA8209361

SCHOEN, LADENE SCHACHINGER, PH.D. *Wayne State University*, 1981. 139pp.

The goal of this study was to determine whether college students who complete a basic speech communication course which stresses both communication theory and a public speaking approach become more rhetorically sensitive and audience sensitive.

Specifically, the study, which was conducted at Wayne State University, had the following objectives: (1) To determine whether rhetorical sensitivity scores of college students change during the time they are enrolled in an introductory speech class which stresses basic communication theory and provides opportunities to practice communication skills in a public speaking situation; also to determine whether noble self scores and rhetorical reflector scores change. (2) To determine whether audience sensitivity scores of students change during the time they are enrolled in the same introductory speech class which stresses the need to analyze audiences and adapt message for specific audiences.

The procedures entailed administering the same scales at both the beginning and the end of the course. The first was the Rhetorical Sensitivity Scale, as revised by Robert Carlson in 1978 for part of his dissertation and reported by Roderick Hart, Robert Carlson, and William Eadie, "Attitudes Toward Communication and Assessment of Rhetorical Sensitivity," *Communication Monographs* 47 (March 1980): 1-22. The second measurement of audience sensitivity, devised specifically for this study to ascertain students' abilities to indicate how they would proceed with the task of preparing a message for a specific audience, was given.

The data were collected and subjected to analysis. Hotelling's T^2 was used to determine if there were significant differences between the pretest and the posttest. As a result of significant results based on Hotelling's T^2, it was considered appropriate to run individual t tests comparing the pretest and posttest scores on the measures. Each of the tests was significant; and, therefore, it was concluded that students who complete the basic communication course do experience an increase in both rhetorical sensitivity scores and audience sensitivity scores.

The increase in rhetorical sensitivity scores and audience sensitivity scores of students, over the duration of a semester in a basic speech communication course, should be encouraging to those college speech communication teachers who feel that a rhetorical position best promotes human understanding.

A COMPARISON OF SKILLS TRAINING PLUS COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING, SKILLS TRAINING ONLY, COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING ONLY, AND NO SYSTEMATIC TREATMENT IN THE REDUCTION OF "TRAIT-LIKE" COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION IN THE CLASSROOM SETTING

Order No. DA8205289

TAUGHER, CHARLES DAVID, PH.D. *The University of Arizona*, 1981. 165pp. Director: James W. Davis

The purpose of this experiment was to determine which of the communication apprehension reduction methods currently available was most effective in classroom application. This contextual concern was a critical factor. Communication apprehension reduction methods not readily applicable to classroom environments were eliminated as viable treatment methods.

Treatment methods (independent variables) tested in this experiment were: skills training plus cognitive restructuring, skills training only, cognitive restructuring only, and a no systematic treatment (control) group. Each of these treatments was reviewed. Nonapplicable treatment methods for classroom environments were also reviewed.

Subjects were randomly chosen and assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. Three introspective self-report instruments measuring communication apprehension were employed as dependent measures. Level of communication apprehension was the dependent variable. Attempts to control a number of extraneous variables in this quasi-experimental design were made.

Composite scores were made for each subject on pre-test and post-test measures, and "Difference" (D) scores were computed from these composite scores. These D scores were submitted to three sets of statistical analyses: a one-way analysis of variance, an analysis of co-variance, and an analysis of co-variance using only those subjects with pre-test composite scores falling above the marginal mean score. In addition, homogeneity of variance tests were run on experimental group variances, and correlation coefficients were computed for each of the six dependent measures (three instruments with one of these instruments having four sub-scales). Also, three sets of Dunnett's tests for comparisons of treatment groups to a control group were made.

The results indicated that no significant differences occurred between any of the four experimental conditions tested. Results of the Dunnett's tests indicated that skills training plus cognitive restructuring was the most effective treatment method of those methods tested. Specifically, significant changes in level of communication apprehension occurred from pre-test to post-test trials when only those subjects above the marginal mean score were used.

Based on the findings reported, instructors were recommended to use skills training plus cognitive restructuring as a communication apprehension reduction technique in classroom environments. The author also recommended that skills training plus cognitive restructuring be employed only with those students experiencing a moderate or high level of communication apprehension.

THE EFFECT OF PREDISCUSSION INSTRUCTION IN INFORMATION PROCESSING ON PERCEIVED QUALITY OF DECISION-MAKING, DISCUSSION EFFICIENCY, AND MEMBER SATISFACTION

Order No. DA8211145

WHALEY, MARIE ANNALA, PH.D. *Indiana University*, 1982. 133pp.

This study examined the effectiveness of prediscussion instruction in information processing as a means of increasing the quality and efficiency of decision-making groups and assessed the impact of this training on group member satisfaction. The following research question was posed: given a discussion task which is, in part, dependent upon the analysis of related information, will a group that has received prior instruction in information processing exhibit a higher quality of decision-making behavior, conduct its discussion in a more efficient and systematic fashion, and achieve greater levels of member satisfaction than the group without training in information processing?

Three independent variables were manipulated: condition of instruction (whether or not the group received the prediscussion training), topic the group discussed, and the size of the group. Three dependent variables were measured: perceived quality of decision-making, discussion efficiency, and member satisfaction.

Forty-two groups, ranging in size from three to six members, were randomly assigned to either the instructed or non-instructed condition, and were also randomly assigned one of two discussion topics. Each group member read an information sheet about the topic before the discussion began. If the group was to receive instruction, the researcher allowed the group members to finish reading and then read the instruction module to them. The groups in the control condition (non-instructed) were supplied with instructions to discuss the topic as best they could. Each discussion was tape-recorded. When finished, the members voluntarily responded to a self-report questionnaire. Independent raters listened to the first ten minutes of each discussion and then rated the groups on the two variables of perceived quality of decision-making and discussion efficiency.

The statistical analysis consisted of a multivariate regression analysis and several analyses of variance. The results indicated that prediscussion instruction in information processing improved the performance of the five-member groups, but had no discernible effect in the four or six-member groups. Although statistical power was a concern, this study nevertheless provides evidence that groups can be taught to improve their information analysis and, eventually, their decision-making.

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